





# LEUCOSARCIA PICATA.

## Wonga-wonga.

*Columba picata*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lix.—Wagl. Syst. Av. Columba, sp. 42.

*Columba armillaris*, Colombe grivelée, Temm. Pig. et Gall., fol. 2nd fam. pl. 6. p. 13.—Ib. Pig. et Gall., tom. i. pp. 97 and 447.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. xi. p. 15.

*Pied Pigeon*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 268.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. viii. p. 47.

*Columba Jamiesonii*, Quoy et Gaim. Voy. Partie Zoolog., p. 123.

*Columba melanoleuca*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lix.—Wagl. Syst. Av. Columbæ non visæ, sp. 8.

*Colombe Goadgang*, Temm. Pig., fol. p. 118.—Ib. Pig. et Gall., tom. i. pp. 369 and 447.

*White-faced Pigeon*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 268.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. viii. p. 46.

*Wonga-wonga*, Aborigines of New South Wales.

*White-fleshed* and *Wonga-wonga Pigeon*, Colonists of New South Wales.

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THE Pigeon forming the subject of the present memoir must always be an object of more than ordinary interest, since, independently of its attractive plumage, it is a great delicacy for the table ; its large size and the whiteness of its flesh rendering it in this respect second to no other member of its family, the only one that at all approximates to it being the *Geophaps scripta*. It is to be regretted that a bird possessing so many qualifications as the present species should not be generally dispersed over the country, but such is not the case. To look for it on the plains or in any of the open hilly parts would be useless ; no other districts than the brushes which stretch along the line of coast of New South Wales, or those clothing the sides of the hills of the interior being favoured with its presence. The same kind of situations that are suited to the Brush Turkey (*Talegalla Lathamii*), the Menura and the Satin Bower-bird are equally adapted to those of the Wonga-wonga ; its distribution, therefore, over Australia mainly depends upon whether the surface of the country be or be not clothed with that rich character of vegetation common to the south-eastern portion of the continent. As the length of its tarsi would lead one to expect, the Wonga-wonga spends most of its time on the ground, where it feeds upon the seeds and stones of the fallen fruits of the towering trees under whose shade it dwells, seldom exposing itself to the rays of the sun, or seeking the open parts of the forest. While traversing these arboreal solitudes, one is frequently startled by the sudden rising of the Wonga-wonga, the noise of whose wings is quite equal to, and not very different from, that made by a Pheasant. Its flight is not of long duration, this power being merely employed to remove it to a sufficient distance to avoid detection by again descending to the ground, or mounting to the branch of a neighbouring tree. I had frequent opportunities of personally observing it at Illawarra, on the low islands at the mouth of the river Hunter, and in the cedar brushes of the Liverpool range. During my encampment in each of these parts, it was always secured whenever an opportunity occurred, for the purpose of eating, the addition of bread-sauce rendering it no ordinary fare.

Of the nidification of this valuable bird I could gain no precise information. It is a species that bears confinement well, and with an ordinary degree of attention, may doubtless be rendered domesticated and useful.

The sexes present no external difference in the markings of their plumage, but the female is somewhat inferior to her mate in size.

Lores black ; forehead and chin white ; all the upper surface, wings and tail deep slate-grey ; primaries brown ; the three lateral tail-feathers on each side tipped with white ; sides of the head light grey, gradually passing into the greyish black of the breast, which latter colour is interrupted on each side by a broad line of white which passes obliquely down, and meets on the centre of the breast near the lower margin of the greyish black ; feathers of the abdomen and flanks white, the latter with a triangular black spot near the extremity of each feather ; under tail-coverts dark brown, largely tipped with buff, particularly on the inner webs ; irides very dark brown, surrounded by a narrow pink-red lash ; tip of the bill purplish black ; base of the bill and the fleshy operculum covering the nostrils pink-red ; legs and feet bright pink-red.

The Plate represents the male and female of the natural size.